FRED TODD SPEAKS OUT!

CASCADE COMIX MONTHLY

June 1979 No. 16 50¢

RIP OFF PRESS 10th ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL!

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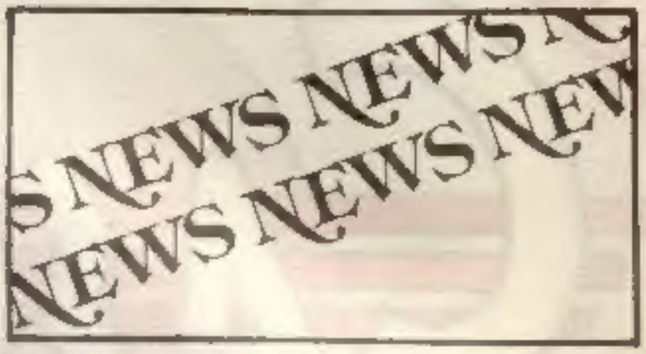

The Spring, 1979 issue of THE COEVOLUTION QUARTERLY contains the first communique from Dan O'Neill's Mouse Liberation Front, in the form of a four-page Mickey Mouse strip. The punch line is that the strip is a federal crime, contempt of the Supreme Court of the United States. The strip chronicles the true story of Mickey and Minnie Mouse since their kidnap by the Air Pirates, and "the Supreme Court guarantees that the mouse you see before you is...the one and only Mickey Mouse! Not a parody!!"

An accompanying introduction by Editor Stewart Brand relates the story of the Air Pirates' legal battle against the Disney organization. O'Neill and his unnamed collaborator (you might recognize the lettering style) are truly underground cartoonists now. This issue also contains comix and a short article on old magazines by Robert Crumb. COEVOLUTION QUARTERLY #21 is available for $3.50 from Box 428, Sausalito, CA 94965.

It looked for a while like Gary Arlington was going to have to close his famed comic book store, owing to a whopping rent increase. Gary has however managed to get his act together, and

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GILBERT SHELTON & A DECADE OF FREAKS

THE SOUTHWESTERN DESERT--Ensconced amid the red velvet and crystal of his restored private railroad car, artist Gilbert Shelton granted the following interview during one of his regular commutes between San Francisco and Austin, Texas:

Q. How did you get started in this line of work?

A. I've been doing it so long I can't remember. I did strips for Boy Scout publications when I was in the Explorer Scouts, and I was in the Cartoonists Club in high school, which was Lamar High in Houston. When I got into college I discovered that they actually paid people for working on the student humor magazine, which to me was a golden opportunity. At one point I was getting a hundred dollars a month for being editor of the University of Texas Ranger, which was enough to live on in those days. I haven't had a real job since 1964.

Q. Did you ever study art?

A. After I graduated and had spent a year in graduate study in history at the University of Texas, I started all over as a freshman in the art department and continued for two more years before I flunked out. No one seemed to notice, or care, that I had gone through another undergraduate course of study. I kept getting my draft deferments.

Q. What brought you to California?

A. A multi-colored 1956 Plymouth. I hung out in Austin, where the University of Texas is, until the Summer of '68. I came out for a little vacation--Austin is really hot in the summer--and I just ended up staying, mainly because the Plymouth died soon after I got to San Francisco. There were a lot of Texans here at that time, and they seemed to be doing well in the music business. I figured I could maybe be a poster and record album cover artist. But about that time I saw Robert Crumb's Zap and I was again filled with inspiration to draw comics. Ever since we started Rip Off Press in 1969, I've done most of my work for Rip Off.

Q. Are the Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers actually real people?

A. They apparently are, because people from all parts of the country keep telling me that they know one or more of the originals. Myself, I find that a little hard to believe, because if a real person actually did the things that the Freak Brothers do, he couldn't possibly have lived this long.

Q. How come the Freak Brothers are so popular? What sort of responsive chord are they striking?

A. They represent the anti-authoritarian spirit. The Joker, the Prankster, Huck Finn. People enjoy reading that sort of stuff because they cannot be that way in real life. If I, or anyone else, actually drew a realistic comic strip, everyone would be totally turned off.

Q. Who are your favorite cartoonists?

A. I've had a lot of favorites over the years. I liked Chester Gould--he's the guy that used to do Dick Tracy--and Chic Young, who originated Blondie, and Al Capp and Jimmy Hatlo among the old-timers. In the fifties

I like Harvey Kurtzman, Jack Davis, Wallace Wood, Don Martin, Jules Feiffer, Charles Addams, Virgil Partch (VIP), Arnold Roth, and Basil Wolverton. A couple that I always liked but only later learned their names, owing to the fact that their publishers never allowed them to sign their work, were Carl Barks, who did Scrooge McDuck and the best of the Donald Duck stories, and John Stanley, who did Little Lulu. Nowadays, my favorite newspaper strips are Johnny Hart's "The Wizard of Id" and "B.C.", Gary Trudeau's "Doonesbury," and Gus Arriola'a "Gordo." There's a local one called "Travels with Farley" that's pretty good. Most of the rest of the syndicated strips I see are really lame. I don't read comic books very much anymore, including undergrounds. I've never been able to read a Marvel comic all the way through.

Q. Which of your own cartoon characters is your favorite?

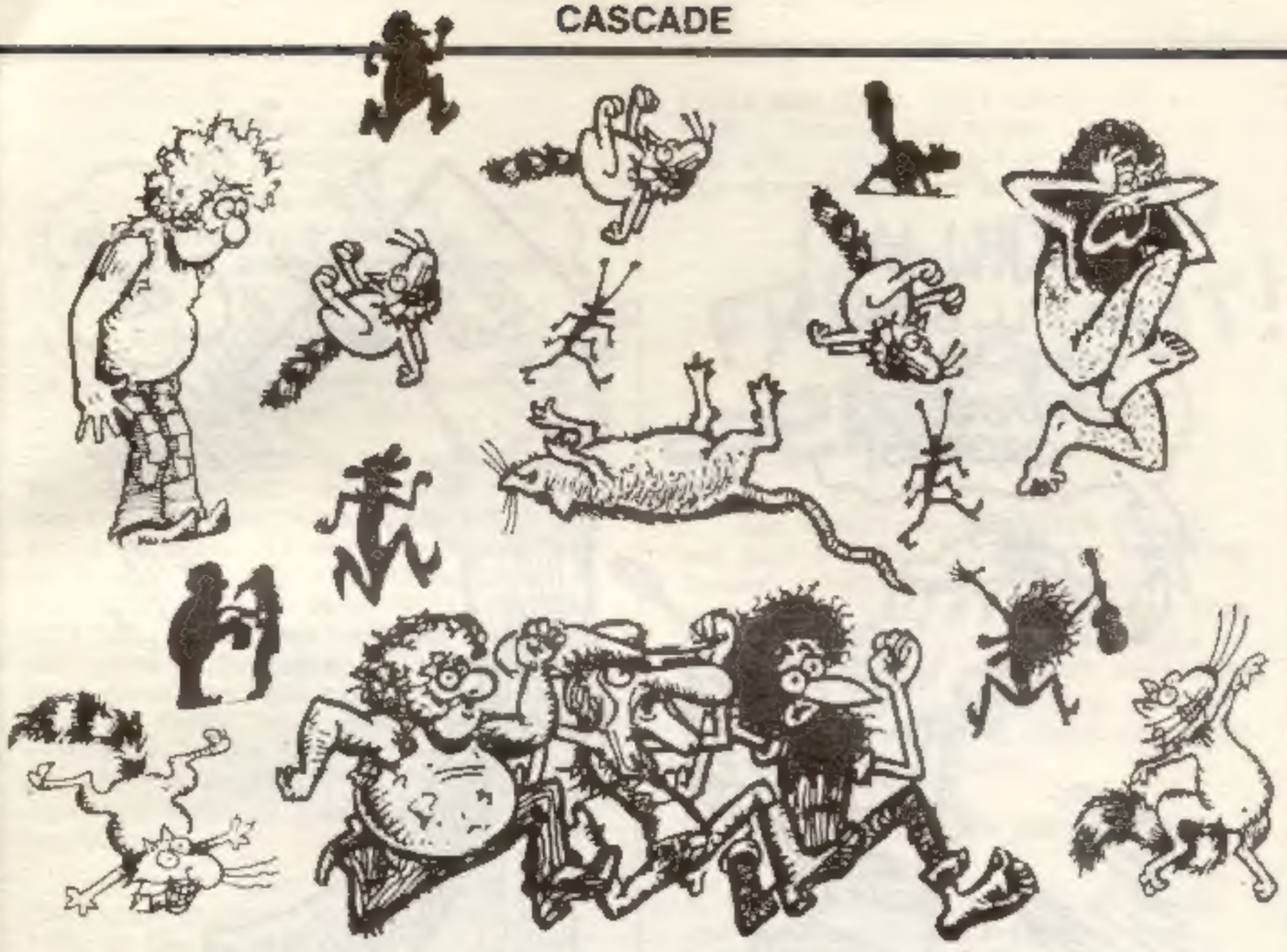
A. I still get a chuckle whenever I draw Wonder Wart-Hog grossly overreacting to some petty crime, like maybe pulling a shoplifter's head off. By the way, don't forget that Philbert Desanex, Wonder Wart-Hog's alter identity, is running for President of the United States in 1980. You can read all about it in the new Wonder Wart-Hog book, The Nurds of November.

Q. What plans to you have for the Freak Brothers in the future?

A. Aside from comic books to be published by Rip Off Press, there will soon be available Freak Brothers cigarette papers, distributed by APD Imports, Inc., out of Austin, Texas. There is also talk of a Freak Brothers movie project, but until I get the big bucks in my proverbial hot little hands, that's all it is. Talk.

Q. What do you think the 80's are going to be like?

photo by Michael Montfort



A. That's a tough question. Oh, well, let me see... First of all, the dollar is going to continue its decline until it is completely worthless. Great numbers of middle-class citizens will become bankrupt, obsolete, and desperate, and will turn to fascism as a natural reaction, although of course they will call it by another name, like "Strength through Smiles" or something. As before, we shall be forced to go to war in order to feed our economy. This time the war will be against Mexico (again). After a brief skirmish, there will be a negotiated settlement: in return for a guarantee to supply the U.S. with crude oil, vast areas of California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas will be returned to Mexico. In the long run, I hope to see a permanent alliance and friendship between these two great nations.

Q. As long as you are making predictions, when will the next earthquake hit?

A. Any time now. And this time, the accompanying fire will be fueled by billions of gallons of hoarded gasoline in everyone's houses eclipsing the great fire of 1906 and even the Dresden firebombing of 1944.

Q. Do you think marijuana will be legal in the near future?

A. Yes. First it will be decriminalized by one state or another, and when that state starts draining all the money out of all the other states a great rush will be on to legalize it everywhere, the end result being domination and commercial exploitation by some huge corporation. And with the $100 per ounce federal tax actually being paid (and that doesn't seem so outrageous any more in the light of today's dope prices) this might be the only thing that can restore economic health to the country. Certainly, the fact that no taxes at all are being paid on the vast amount of money that is diverted into the dope market is one of the major causes of our economic woes in the first place.

Q. What connection do you have with NORML and other legalization groups?

A. I have now and then donated pieces of artwork to NORML for their fund-raising purposes. I got to go to a swell party at Hugh Hefner's mansion once, just by donating a mere $800 worth of artwork. One of my sisters once persuaded me to take her to the Washington, D.C., office of NORML on the off chance that she could abduct then-chairman Keith Stroup, who she thought was "cute." But that's the sum total of it.

Q. How come the Freak Brothers never get laid?

A. You know, every time I get interviewed, I get asked the same dumb questions: "How come the Freak Brothers never get laid?"--which they do, occasionally, as in "Fat Freddy gets the Clap" in Facts 'o' Life Funnies (Multi Media, San Francisco, 1972)--and also, "Where do you get your ideas?"

Q. Where do you get your ideas?

A. I steal them, mainly. Occasionally, one of my friends might write a story for me. I've discovered that marijuana makes things seem a lot funnier, but unfortunately the reader has to be equally stoned or the idea is likely to make no sense at all.

Q. Well, are you rich and happy?

A. What? Of course I'm rich, you idiot! Are you blind or something? Look at all this crap--this railroad car, these paintings, furniture. That's a genuine Louis XIV chair you're sitting on, you dimwit! This wine we're drinking cost forty dollars a bottle! And these shoes I've got on, they cost over three hundred dollars! They're made out of horned toad hides! These kind of toads are extinct now, because they killed them all to make cowboy boots with. Jeez! The interview is over! Get out of here! What a jerk!

GILBERT SHELTON
BIOGRAPHY

Cartoonist, writer. Creator of The Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers, Fat Freddy's Cat, Wonder Wart-Hog, and Oat Willie.

Born: Dallas, Texas, May 31, 1940.

Education: BA (History), University of Texas, 1961.

Shelton's cartoon character Wonder Wart-Hog was first published in various college humor magazines during the early sixties. It was later featured in Harvey Kurtzman's HELP! Magazine and later still in Peter Millar's DRAG CARTOONS, an automotive humor magazine published in Torrance, California. Throughout the late sixties, Shelton's Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers appeared regularly in the East Village Other and the Los Angeles Free Press and were reprinted by underground papers everywhere.

The first comic book edition of the Freak Brothers was published in 1971 by the Rip Off Press of San Francisco. Since then, more than two million copies of the Freak Brothers comics, books, and posters have been bought by eager fans. Wonder Wart-Hog appears regularly in Rip Off Comix. Both series have been published extensively in foreign translations, including German, French, Italian, Spanish, Danish, Dutch, Finnish, and Portuguese. A request from Yugoslavia was refused, according to Shelton, because the Yugoslavians, being communists, do not believe in the capitalist free-enterprise profit system and offered no money.

COMIX PUBLISHER TELLS OF HUMBLE ORIGINS AND PLANS FOR WORLD CONQUEST AFTER TEN YEARS' CLIMB

FRED TODD SPEAKS OUT!

San Francisco--Ten years ago it was just a wild-eyed scheme, involving Texans, printing presses and comic books. Today, with a little help from the Freak Brothers, it's one of the nation's greatest comic book publishing houses. Fred Todd, President of Rip Off Press, Inc., talks about the early days and the days ahead.

Q. It all started ten years ago. How did it begin?

A. Well, there was a batch of Texans who had come to San Francisco from Austin. It was the 60s and everything was happening. More of it was happening in San Francisco so the four Texans who were to become the Rip Off Press ended up here. Jack Jackson was thinking about how to get his pioneer underground comic God Nose reprinted. Gilbert Shelton made a trip out from Austin with a spring-breaking load of Feds & Heds, his comic. Dave Moriaty kinda stood in the middle and said, "Gee, let's get all this together... let's buy a printing press." Moriaty was living in my flat in the space where a washing machine would have been if I could have afforded a washing machine. He had decided that the key to the universe was a printing press.

Q. So you decided to become a publisher, distributor and printer of comic books?

A. Right. I threw in some money because I was the one with the downtown job as a computer programmer, and, consequently, the money. These other guys were just crazy hippies. We bought a little Davidson press for something like a hundred bucks apiece down. It was really just a glorified mimeo machine. Our first job was a four-color poster on coated paper. We threw away two-thirds of the press run...we had to pull the sheets off the press... they made this terrible ripping noise. (Sigh!) I didn't really like that phase of the Rip Off Press...when we were all being gentleman printers. (Laughter.)

photo by Nick Wilson

Q. Where was Rip Off Press' first home?

A. It started off at Mowry's Opera House at Laguna and Grove in San Francisco. It was an incredible place! Don Donahue, the mad printer of Apex Novelties was up there printing Snatch Comics on this old Multilith and heating up his brandy and sake on a little electric stove. It was a big old place with a porno movie maker in one part, and a couple of rock bands practicing. It ended when a building down the street burned and our attic caught fire, too. Fortunately, the firemen were just down the street and they came and put it out real quick. But, the ceiling came down. It ruined the first press run of our first publication, R. Crumb's Comics & Stories. So, we took the printing press apart and carried it down three flights of stairs and threw it in the back of my Falcon.

Q. Where next?

A. Jaxon was the art director and accountant for the Family Dog, which had just folded, so we moved into their old office, right past the eviction notice on the door. The building was owned by the urban renewal agency, which took on the responsibility of resettling us...into a soon-to-be-demolished building...a corner store on the fifth busiest intersection in town! I consider this one the golden period. The sun came in the windows...we paid $60 a month rent for the place, including an apartment in which six people lived. By this time we were doing about one third publishing and two thirds job printing. Our first year we published Crumb's little comic, and his first Motor City Comics. Gilbert's Hydrugen Bomb was one of the early ones ...perhaps the first dollar comic. But pretty much it was living on ten dollars a week and if somebody came in and bought some comix we'd eat lunch.

Q. Was it about then that the decision was made to publish Gilbert's Freak Brothers strips as a comic book?

A. Yes. We were always after Gilbert to do something we could publish. It finally happened...and is still happening like gangbusters.

The urban renewal folks finally decided to tear down our building and make it into a parking lot, so we moved to our present home at the foot of San Francisco's scenic Potrero Hill. Things started happening. We got this monster press, the Ebco, made by the Electric Boat Company after they gave up making submarines. It was a terrible

machine...ill maintained and not wonderful to begin with...the printers cursed it regularly. We got a two-color Solna press. Then we bought a web press.

There's two parts to a comic book. There's the cover, which we were already printing on our Solna. Then there's the insides which are printed on newsprint by a web press. These presses are huge capital investments... they're 60 to 70 feet long, ten feet high, five feet wide, taking five or six people to operate, working real hard in unison after great training. A press capable of eating trainloads of paper. Well, our gang of clowns would go out there and fumble around and try to remember what it was they did last time we made comic books, ruin a couple three plates and chew up half a forest of paper.

Then along came the great newsprint shortage of 1973 at about the same time we started a magazine, the Rip Off Review of Western Culture. Between the web and the magazine we soon owed a potful of money to all the paper companies in town. The sheriff came and repossessed the web and it took two days to get it out of the building.

CONT'D ON PAGE 13...

Quick Ones

BY BILL SHERMAN

The size favors them more than postage-size paneling, and that may be the reason we've been getting more and more mini-zine portfolios lately. The price is right, and the size lends the art a nice air of informality that in no way clashes with its "integrity." (Or whatever.) My initial reaction--traditionalist comix fan that I am--to the format was mixed, but on eyeballing my way through the recent rash of mini-portfolios I have been won over. What at first seemed to be avoidance of the storytelling problems inherent in mini-zine size, now seems right and natural, perhaps even more natural than struggling to squeeze ten panels into four-by-five inch spaces. (Think I'll go look back over my PLATINUM TOADs.)

ART SCHOOL CANTEEN

Three sets by Rick Geary ($1.40 a set; $2.30 for two; or $3.45 for three from Rick Geary, P.O. Box 99835, San Diego, CA 92109)

Top spot in the column goes to Rick Geary's packaged sets (they come in little envelopes like thank you cards) of California drawings. Each set's copyrighted a different year, which leads me to assume it represents a year's worth of progress. While Geary's drawing style doesn't substantively change, his familiarity with printing and format does ('77's NINE VIEWS, a two-and-a-half inch series of photos is too small and indistinct to communicate much, but '79's FAREWELL TO CHARLIE CHAPLIN mixes photos and art smoothly).

Geary's books range in size, the smallest and most gimmicky being the one-and-a-quarter inch VARIOUS ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES, which consists of a series of still-life electrical items--first in the series is a portable teevee, natch. Taking items out of their context and placing them on the page just isn't as telling as focusing on them in their own setting, and Geary seems to have realized this in his later booklets. AMERICAN MOTELS ('78) and THE SHOPPING MALL BOOK ('79) especially use borderline caricature to great effect as the artist pokes into the corners and fountains--like those comic quickcut shots in Romero's "Dawn of the Dead"--of formicaland. Equally intriguing and a bit more concerned with story are YOUNG EISENHOWER ('77), NIGHT SHIFT ('78) and FAREWELL. In the last, Geary's most strictly chronological story (a recreation of the recent Chaplin graverobbing), the artist creates an arresting sense of dislocation by focusing his panels either away from or immediately after the action and keeping his narration plain and matter-of-fact. Definitely an artist to watch.

TIME LAPSE GROWTH ($2.50 from Jamie Alder, 9970 Liberty Rd., Chelsea, MI 48118)

Meanwhile, still floating in the Outer Limits (you know: Michigan!) is Jamie Alder with this seven-page loose portfolio of color xerox prints. I've never seen the printing used this way before, and chances are you haven't either. With color, artist "Bill Shut's" abstract plumbing turns organic, and the result's kinda like intercepting radio waves from an intergalactic eruption contest. My fave Alder zine so far: worth the price if you liked his previous zines or are feeling experimental.

MARVELOUS FRUITS & VEGGIES PORTFOLIO ($1.25 a set from Richard Bruning, 409 S. Livingston, Madison, WI 53703)

On the other side of the cabbage patch, there's this Utterly Frivolous Item, a loose four-page portfolio on card stock with matchbook cover that takes serious Marvel Comics superheroes and turns them into cartoony foodstuff (eg. Peardevil, The Fruit Without Fear). Dedicated to Vootie, this is pretty lightweight stuff, but Bruning has

such a swell cartoony style that I find myself praising his package. Hopefully, Bruning's next package will have material that matches his paper weight.

DOWN IN THE STRIPMINE

GIZMO #1 ($1.00 from Tom Mason, 705 Draper Road, Blacksburg, VA 24060)

A thirty-two page stripzine that isn't about the infamous Bloomington, Indiana rock group but rather is a collection of strips and drawings by the likes of George Erling (cover), Gary Whitney, Grass Green, Brad Foster, editor Mason and others. This is one of those zines that test the line between comix and fanzine, but I'm inclined to put it in the former category due to its prevalence of comix talent. Tops of the ish is Foster's "Bertram and the Gizmos," a continued comic tale of renegade robots (closer to the robots in "Sleeper" than in MAGNUS, ROBOT FIGHTER) that has slick panel overlap but some awkward dialog. Whitney's "Grape Jam" once again does the anthropomorphic edibles bit, but it doesn't match his really funny stuff. Perhaps spuds are funnier? Green's three-page funny animal strip is likewise slight, but it's great to see his loose cartoony style again after several years' absense from the comix scene. Is this a preview of what to expect from the upcoming Green comix book?

REAL DOPE THRILLS and WALDO AND EMERSON (25¢ each from Everyman Studios, 432 S. Cascade, Colorado Springs, CO 80903)

The second pair in the Everyman series, this follows the first set by having one title focus on a single artist, the second on a theme. The artist is J. Siergey, whose "Waldo and Emerson" has appeared in CASCADE. Siergey bills his comix as "existential slapstick," and while I accept the slapstick part easily, I'll have to see more of what he's doing with his characters to decide on the existential part of his label. The material here just isn't enough: with the exception of four reprinted strips on the inner cover Siergey draws his panels large and composes them sparely. This minicomic could have been four pages instead of eight--to much greater effect.

The theme book is about dope, of course, and among other contributors there's a Darrel Anderson/Artie Romero collaboration (featuring the return of Artie Stick)--great rendering but a pinhead pun--and a Romero illustration back cover. Ye editor's art is too infrequent. (Another case of Kitchen's Disease?) Other pieces include an evocative Phil Yeh smoke love revery, a Peterson peaen to inertness, and a new addition to the paranoid's catalog courtesy Gary Whitney. "Komix with a Kick," indeed!

"AWRIGHT, MAC - ONE MORE PEEP AN' I'M THROWING YA' OUT!"

NEWS, CONT. FROM PAGE 2

the legendary underground cartoonists' hangout will not close after all.

Gary is also working on two issues of SAN FRANCISCO COMIC BOOK, which promise to have some exciting comics in them. This news courtesy of Kim Deitch.

Krupp now has CORPORATE CRIME #2 and PHOEBE & THE PIGEON PEOPLE (Lynch and Whitney) at press, with both expected to be ready by early June. Going to press in June will be SPIRIT #21 and DOPE COMIX #3 (Lynch cover). According to Denis Kitchen, those two titles are now their hottest. The new Eisner outer-space serial has changed format; instead of 16 small pages in a pull-out format, the pages are now being run full size, in order. The earlier gimmick seemed to be more of a nuisance for most readers. The DOPE COMIX series will be anthologized into a squareback edition this fall, including a color section. And they now have large full-color posters based on the Leslie Cabarga and John Pound covers for DOPE COMIX #1 and #2, available for $3.50 postpaid.

Denis Kitchen has been lecturing around the state of Wisconsin at colleges the past few months, giving a slide show and mainly discussing the history of underground comix.

Peter Poplaski traveled to New York last month and stopped in at the Marvel office for kicks. He showed Marie Severin his sketchbook and she said, "You're too good to work here." Pete's cover for CORPORATE CRIME #2 is in the same Chester Gould style as his ITT story in #1. He has just completed front covers for WEIRD TRIPS #3, DEATH RATTLE #4, and has been doing covers regularly for regional tabloids YESTERYEAR and FOX RIVER PATRIOT.

Robert Crumb and Aline Kominsky spent several days in Princeton looking at real estate in April. Crumb is working on MR. SNOID COMICS for Kitchen Sink, while Aline is wrapping up a solo book (as yet untitled) for the same company.

Leonard Rifas is moving back to California in the first part of June. On his way back from Wisconsin he will serve as an "investigative cartoonist" in the Dakotas where uranium mining interests are battling the Indians who are trying to protect their traditional sacred lands. Leonard wants to maintain part-time residence in Wisconsin, which he has grown fond of, but plans to spend a lot of time in California where his family and larger libraries are.

Kitchen Sink is working on a squareback collection of the early, obscure, and unpublished work of Will Eisner. The book is not titled yet, but publication is planned for fall of '79.

Robert Wiener's UNDERGROUND COMIX CHECKLIST will go to press later this month, a large-format 128 page book listing every ug ever published. This will not list prices, contrary to the rumors that have been flying concerning impending publication of an underground price guide. It will have 1300 photos of comix covers, artists, etc., plus glossy color covers. The initial print run will be 5000 copies, and the book will sell for $4.50. Advance orders may be sent to Robert Wiener, Box 93, MIT Branch Cambridge, MA 02139; include 50¢ extra for postage.

Bill Griffith and Diane Noomin visited New York in late May. An interview with Diane will be presented in the next issue of CASCADE. She's now working on a solo book, HOT PINK COMIX, but

it's still about 8 months away from completion.

Everyman Studios has just published two new books, ANIMAL BITE COMIX and HOBO STORIES. Both are standard underground format, with glossy color covers and newsprint interiors. ANIMAL BITE has comix by Doug Hansen, Hunt Emerson, George Erling, John Adams and others--all animal stories. HOBO STORIES has a theme of hitchhiking, with comix by Dave Taylor (YELLOW DOG, REALM), John Adams and Artie (Ed) Romero. HOBO STORIES is available for $1.25 plus 25¢ postage (adults only), and ANIMAL BITE is $1.00 plus 25¢ postage from Everyman Studios, 432 S. Cascade Ave., Colorado Springs, CO 80903.

Jim Siergey's LITTLE BOOK OF NART, a new 8-pager, is now ready for immediate mailing. It's 50¢ postpaid from Hermitage House, 4135 N. Hermitage, Chicago, IL 60613.

Wayne Gibson, 2521 N. 40th, Seattle, WA 98103, has a new 4-page zine called TRANSIT PICTORIAL, for 25¢ plus a stamp, or 50¢ signed.

John Adams' PURE ART QUARTERLY #12 is out, a special "This is for keeps" number. Limited, as usual, to 100 numbered copies, this 16-pager goes for 50¢ postpaid. Order from John Adams, Box 1527, Boulder, CO 80306.

To try to stimulate interest in collecting comix original art I have begun activity as a dealer. Collectors interested in buying or selling are invited to write me, as are artists who desire sales representation.

ALFRED BERGDOLL
25 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10003

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The Freak Brothers pulled us through. We went from 15 people to 3 when our print shop died. We were 15 to 20 grand in the red, underground comix sales were falling and the phone was ringing off the wall...guys demanding their money yesterday. The only thing selling for us then was the first two issues of the Freak Brothers comix. We'd print ten or twenty thousand at a time..as many as we could convince some printer we could pay for. We'd truck 'em to our warehouse and sell 'em and wait for the money. Then we'd do it again. We very care fully did nothing but that for two years.

Sometime alone in the darkest part of all that, Gilbert came in one morning, pulled a stool up to a light table and began drawing a Freak Brothers strip. There had been some talk about him being tired of drawing the brothers and we all thought maybe the world had seen the last of those hairy dudes. But what he started that morning became Freak Brothers Comix #3. Sometime this year the sixth one will be out.

Q. What else will happen this year? Is it the year the dollar comic dies?

A. Well, paper prices went up 13% in three months so far. The other two bay area comix publishers are at $1.25 or headed for it. We've always tried to give our readers as much as possible for as little as possible, but, hell, can you buy a hamburger anywhere for a dollar now? I suppose the Freak Brothers comix will have to go to $1.25 sometime this year.

Q. Two quick last questions: Are you rich?

A. Hah! Sears hasn't given me a credit card yet!

Q. Are you happy?

A. Am I happy? Well, some days.

UNDERGROUND GAS

by Bruce Sweeney

I hope that I can be the first on the block to introduce you folks to a new underground talent named Valentino He was born in the Bronx in '52 but raised primarily in California. He has not had any formal training, just OJT. He cites Crumb, Wood, Beck, Sarate, Farmer and Disney as his prin ciple influences.

Valentino has created a comix series called Four-Bit Funnies. Numbers 1, 2 and 3 are out. The original print run to #1 was 200, 100 of which were signed and numbered and there are not that many left. Contact Valentino at 11900 Oertley Circle, Garden Grove, CA 92641 fast because you are bound to enjoy #1 (aka Christmas Comics). It's a nasty gross-out against the institution of Christmas (I love it) and its completely outrageous and the art is quite good. His Four-Bit #3 is one of the best solo 7¢-er that I have seen in a long time. Valentino is well on his way to getting #4 finished which will be called "Kid Stuff" and should be out very soon. He intends to release a series of stamp-sized comix (1" x 1") called micro-mini comix featuring such titles as Toenail Sketches and Famous Body Parts. He's also the major contributor to a comic called Unholy--he's done the cover and about 4 stories to be published by Ken Krueger Productions. It's allegedly quite violent and is due very soon with a $2.00 cover price. I have seen the cover and it's very good looking.

I heard from Larry Fuller recently who took exception to my comment about Funny Book #3 forsaking the undergrounds. Funny Book #3 is clearly a new ground level attempt by Larry but he recently sent me a copy of Gay Heartthrobs #2 which was clearly an underground and manages to avoid presenting an opinion pro or con while still being an effective book. I highly recommend it, even at the $2.00 cover price. Larry assures me that he also has a title, Adults Only, at the printer. I stand corrected and it's good to hear that Larry will still be giving us u.g.s. Try him at 681 Ellis St., Box 2595, San Francisco, CA 94109.

Word had it that a mini-comix is out called Bananarama with art by Scott Shaw, John Pound, Joek Milke, and other San Diego people. The print run was limited to about 300 but they are not that easy to locate. Jay Kinney is working on Anarchy #2 and if it's as good as Anarchy #1, it will be definitely worth getting. He also is at work on Corporate Crime #2

I just received Time Lapse Growth from Jamie Alder which is about 4" x 5½" which is comparable to the "7¢-ers" of old, right? Well, this little number will cost you $2.50, fans, from Jamie at 9970 Liberty Road, Chelsea, MI 48118. There are 7 color pages inside of strange and farsies-outsies Art (otherwise known as lines on paper). Now, I truly believe that that reflects the true cost incurred by Jamie, but still, $2.50 is just not competitive for this unusual number. He does have more heartening news, however, in that Tales Too Tough for T.V. #2 will feature Brad Foster, Artie Bohm, Doug Bryson, Chris Rock, Dave Coleman and Alder, which sounds like a must-get to me.

Speaking of 7¢-ers, Curt Metz just sent me a copy of his Carpet-Crawler, which is a mother. It features a Metzger cover and Curt claims that every page represents a story and I hope to hear more on that later, but meanwhile, the print-run was only 100, which is unfortunate.

Wow! Dig Boxell's Curtains in No Ducks #2! He's still breaking taboos while showing class and Lei's Moebius satire is right on the money! The Cloven Tree is the best thing from J. Michael Leonard yet; his sense of dialogue is really well done. No Ducks #2 is just so-o-o good. Out from Last Gasp.

Rey King of Cosmic Circus and I Am notoriety wrote and explained that Cosmic Circus #5 is almost ready. He's waiting on Mark Bode to complete his epic story about a horny robot. He just completed coloring one of his father's last comic strips, soon to be published in the June or July Heavy

Metal. You can believe that I'm eager to see this newcomer! Orgasm Review is also just about out from Rey and for raw, privately-published stuff, it is just great. The cover alone with a certain familiar looking comic book rodent molesting a female mouse is just about alone worth the cover price. The guts are great, also. There's stuff in there that reminds me of early Osborne, a Barefootz-like character, an intense graphic or two and it all adds up to a good homemade item and I saw a copy without the final 4 pages. Cosmic Circus #5 will be $2.50 pp (print run 1000-5000); Orgasm Review will be $2.00 pp (500 copies); Cosmic Circus record $1.25 pp which I frankly have not played yet (500 copies); and Best of C.C. $2.50 pp (1000 copies left) or any three items will be only $5.00 from him at 521 33rd St., Oakland, CA 94609.

R. Diggs' has Great Diggs #2 out now and available from Rip Off Press, P.O. Box 14158, San Francisco, CA 94114. It's 8½" x 11" and is done on book paper with a heavy full-color cover. Diggs does some really great political cartoons and it's a lot of fun because he is genuinely clever and operates with a very barbed pen. If you are into that sort of thing, however, the Boston Globe's Szep has some of the best political cartoons of our time. Both of these guys now have books out that are worth the $.

City Limits Comix are the direct result of a lack of UG outlets--it's sort of an u.g. fanzine done by Zabel, Perkins, Chrislip, Collins and Gulacy who are local to Youngstown, Ohio. A 12-pager, 5½" x 8½" b+w, it's certainly a bargain at the 50¢ plus postage. Try and get a copy from Bruce Chrislip at 4472 Barrington, Youngstown, Ohio 44515.

If you haven't already, just wait until you see Sloppy Seconds produced by Bachner, Anderson and Geiser available for 34½¢ from Walter Bachner, 178 E. 80th St., Apt. 2A, New York City, NY 10021. Of course, if you want one signed in blood and numbered by artist Geiser, merely send along $15 to Dave Geiser, 186 Albion St., San Francisco, CA 94110. Geiser reminds me more and more of S. Clay Wilson than Wilson does and it's just plain beautiful in its wacked-out grossness. It's worth the price alone for the expression, "Let's open up a can of Kick-ass" but this one definitely qualifies for Sick-of-the-Month Club Award. I love it.

Then there's "The Hang-up" which is billed as Canada's first Above-ground comic when in reality it's more like her eighth underground. It's a "pictorial story" by Randall Muir and deals with a guy who grows a five-foot dong. Try and get it from Muir at General Delivery, Postal Station P, 33 Court St. S., Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada, 75¢ plus postage, whatever that would be.

Hollywood Fats is another new title, 8½" x 5½", with art by Milke, Erling, Carol Lay, and Scott Shaw. There were 2000 printed as a promotional item for a California band named Hollywood Fats. The band used 1500 as promotional items and the remainder went to the artists. It won't necessarily be an easy item to find so anyone hip to the whereabouts let me know. George Erling says he does not have them. He does say that Yikes 4 may be out this summer, though.

Four Bit #3, aka Fuckin' A Funnies, is out for 75¢ unsigned, $1.50 signed and numbered plus a stamp per book, limited to 200.

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FLYING FUNGUS FUNNIES

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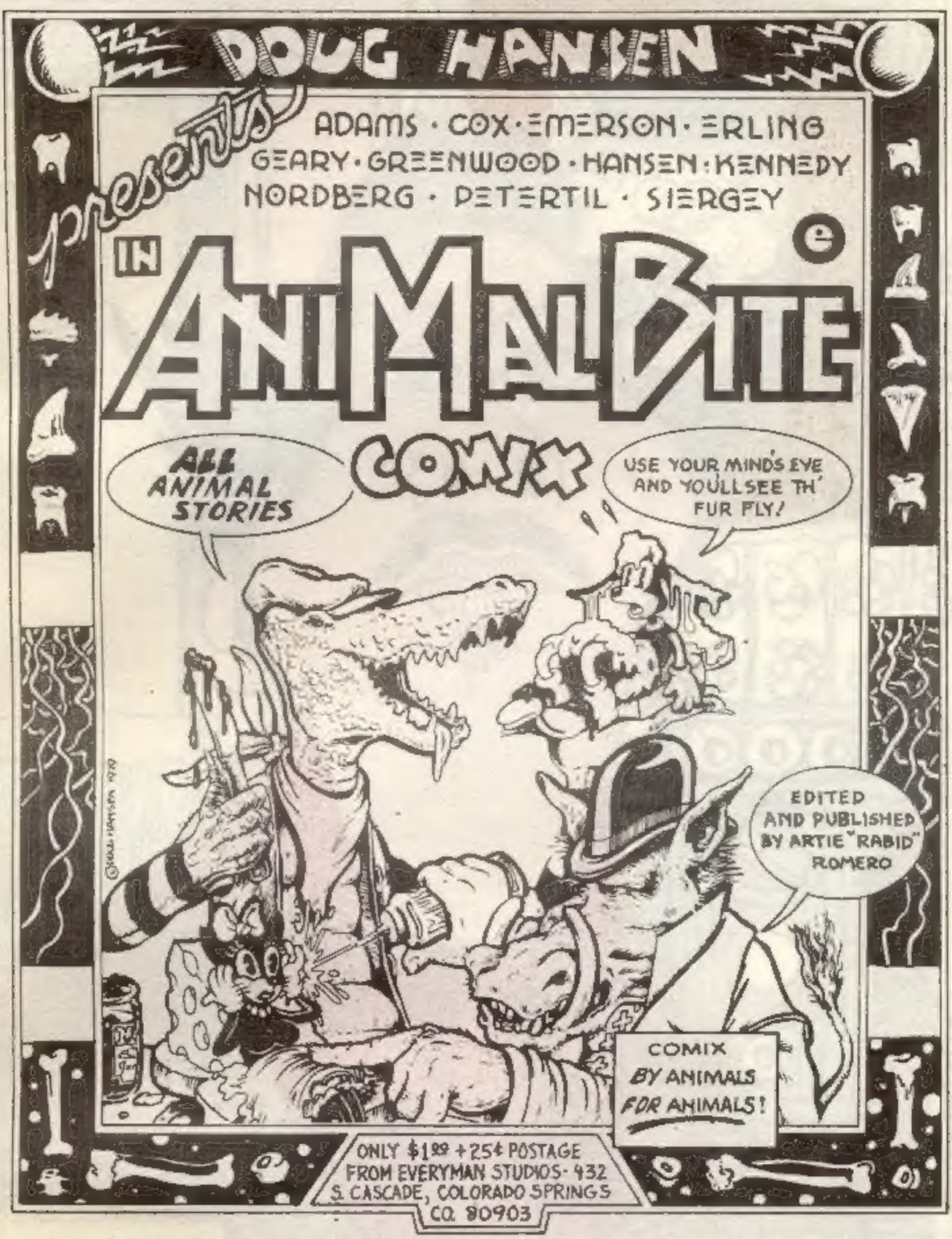
SO THEY THINK I'M CRAZY, DO THEY? JUST BECAUSE THEY CAN'T SEE THE FLYING MUSHROOMS!
WELL MAYBE I AM CRAZY! I MEAN, REALLY! MAYBE THIS JOB IS DRIVING ME NUTS! WELL AT LEAST I'LL BE ABLE TO RELAX IN THE BAHAMAS...
...NO MORE MUSHROOMS THERE—HEH-HEH...
MEANWHILE...
MOMMY! DADDY! THE GIANT MUSHROOM JUST FLEW AWAY WITH BILLY!
OMIGOD!
THIS HAS GONE FAR ENOUGH!
I'VE CALLED THE STATE POLICE AND THE GOVERNOR ABOUT THESE DAMN THINGS, AND NO ONE'S DONE ANYTHING ABOUT 'EM! NOW I'M GOIN' TO TH' TOP—I'M CALLIN' OUR CONGRESSMAN!
HELLO—OPERATOR—GET ME WASHINGTON, D.C.—I WANT TO TALK TO SENATOR ALBERT HOOCHAW!
Whitney

TO BE CONTINUED...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